



## Obituary: John Burtenshaw

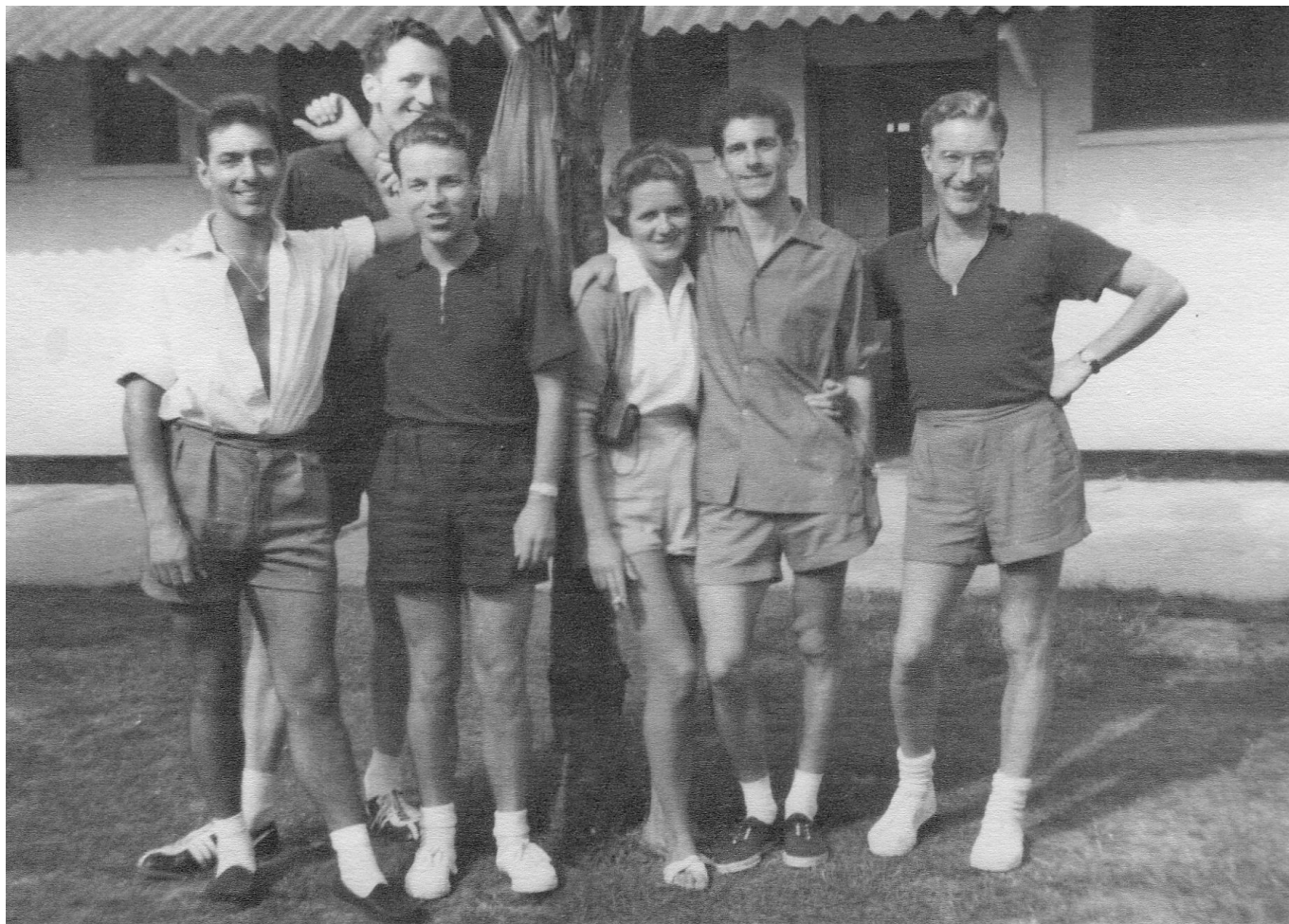
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John Burtenshaw, a Vice-President of Table Tennis England, has died a week after his 87th birthday.

John's table tennis story started 70 years ago when he joined Ashford (Kent) & District Table Tennis Association, playing for Kennington Youth Club in Division 2. Early signs of his administrative leanings showed when he joined the Committee that year as the Division 2 representative.

The next four years saw John's playing ability improve and was a member of the team which won the Division 1 Championships and Cup competitions. The winning continued for several years after John returned to Ashford after completing his National Service which commenced in 1955. He played whilst in the Army for the Royal Army Dental Corps and played over 50 representative matches, all as Captain.



John Burtenshaw (third left) pictured at Butlin's Skegness in 1959 with Bobby Stevens, Tony Condon, George Savage and Dick Hopkins. From the John Burtenshaw Collection.

1960 saw John join the Kent County Committee as a player representative and also a member of the Junior Selection Committee; by 1962 he was the Junior Non-Playing Captain and 1964 saw John elected Chairman of the Ashford TTL and help write Kent TTA's 5 Year Plan.

Having achieved his Coaching Diploma in 1963 John had a keen interest in the junior game and its development and became Kent's first coaching officer. He organised the first Kent Schools' Association competition for 90 schools and 300 teams, a competition which John continued to run for several years with numbers continually increasing.

He was still playing and winning trophies as well as organising many tournaments and events including dinner/dances and other social occasions. It was as a result of arranging a trip to Brussels with the Kent Senior team, a fixture Kent won by one game, that John was invited to be an Honorary Member of the Belgium RAF TTA.

In 1968 John left his county of Kent and moved to the West Country and began coaching and playing in the Bristol and Weston-super-Mare areas. It wasn't long before he joined both the Weston-Super-Mare League Committee, becoming Chairman in 1981, and Avon County TTA.

John's organising endeavours continued with tournaments, events and social gatherings as well as with restructuring practices, procedures and re-writing rules and constitutions within league and county, he also helped edit their first handbook in 1981. As a result he was made the first Life Member and Vice-President of Weston-super-Mare League in 1985, and in 1987 the accolade of President.

Added to an increasing string of awards was the ETTA Merit Award for "devoted services to table tennis" in 1985. By this time John was a member of Woodspring District Sports Council and received their 'Administrator of the Year Cup' in 1985, another fitting honour.



Avon County was taking a more prominent role as in 1991 John was elected Vice-Chairman and National Councillor in 1991 until 1996 and Chairman 1993–96. By 1997 John was made Chairman of the ETTA South West Regional Development Committee which covered seven counties and the Chairman of the Regional Development Officers Support Group. The former role meant a position on the ETTA Development Committee. All the while he was still playing, still organising and still coaching, gaining his ETTA Level 4 Coaching Award in 1997.

John continued in all his roles at club, league, county, regional and national level and as a reward and fitting accolade he received the honour of becoming an ETTA Vice-President in 2006. It was this year that John became Deputy National for Somerset and in 2010, until 2016, their National Councillor, already having attended Council meetings for many years in his role as South West Regional Chairman.

2013 saw another committee added to the long list when John joined the ETTA Trade Committee. After serving on the South West Regional Committee for 26 years, 19 of them as Chairman, John stepped down in 2016 from this and all other ETTA positions.

The above is a small snapshot of many of John's activities within English table tennis and although they give an impression of his involvement they do not truly reflect the total commitment John had at all levels, nor do they reflect his charming personality.



John (front right) during the 100 Club visit to the Houses of Parliament in 2006. From the Doreen Stannard Collection.

John was always interested in people and loved being in company, as a member of the ETTA 100 Club he was a regular at their annual functions with his wife, Jill – always with a story or two, a twinkle in his eye and often a bit of leg pulling as well. John was a kindly man and showed great concern and consideration for his many friends – and they were numerous.

70 years – more than a lifetime – of dedication, commitment and selfless giving to the sport he loved. We thank



you John. Our condolences and deepest sympathy go to John's wife, Jill.

Table Tennis England Chairman Sandra Deaton is among those to have paid tribute, saying: "It is with deep sadness I learned of John's passing. He was a dedicated to the sport of table tennis and very much involved at the governance level.

"I sat alongside John for many years on the Regional Forum, where his attention to detail in reporting was always outstanding. As regional chair he worked tirelessly to develop the sport at grassroots level.

"He will be greatly missed and our thoughts go out to Jill and the family at this very sad time.

[Click here to read a personal reflection by Wiltshire TTA Chairman and President Noel Sewell](#)

Doreen Stannard, Table Tennis England Honorary Past President and an Honorary Life Member, said: "When John joined our select corner at National Council, little did I know that he would become a firm and loyal friend, always with a smile and a joke, he was a fun person to be with. A great supporter of the 100 Club functions together with his wife, Jill.

"I shall miss his regular friendly calls and hope he gets an organiser's job upstairs."



Jill and John Burtenshaw at the 100 Club dinner in 2007. Courtesy of Doreen Stannard.

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